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What is the key to effective prayer?

Question: "What is the key to effective prayer?"

Answer: We all want our prayers to be “effective,” so much so that when we focus on the “results” of our prayers, we lose sight of the incredible privilege we have in prayer. That people like us can speak to the Creator of the universe is itself an amazing thing. Even more astounding is the fact that He hears us and acts on our behalf! The first thing we need to understand about effective prayer is that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ had to suffer and die on the cross to even make it possible for us to approach the throne of grace to worship and pray ([Hebrews 10:19-25](#)).

Although the Bible offers a great deal of guidance on how we can deepen our communication with the Creator, effective prayer has more to do with the one doing the praying than it does with “how” we are to pray. Indeed, Scripture says, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” ([James 5:16](#)), and that the “eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer” ([1 Peter 3:12](#); [Psalm 34:15](#)), and, again, “the prayer of the upright pleases Him” ([Proverbs 15:8](#)). Prayer saved the righteous Daniel from the lion’s den ([Daniel 6:11](#)), and in the wilderness, God’s chosen people benefitted from Moses’ right standing with God ([Exodus 16-17](#)). The barren Hannah’s steadfast and humble prayers resulted in the prophet Samuel ([1 Samuel 1:20](#)), and the apostle Paul’s prayers even caused the earth to shake ([Acts 16:25-](#)

[26](#)). Clearly, the passionate prayers of God's righteous children can accomplish much ([Numbers 11:2](#)).

We need to make sure that our prayers are in line with God's will. "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us" ([1 John 5:14-15](#)). Praying in accordance with God's will is essentially praying in accord with what He would want, and we can see God's revealed will throughout Scripture. And if we do not know what to pray for, Paul reminds us that as God's children we can rely on the Holy Spirit to intercede for us, as "the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will" ([Romans 8:27](#)). And since the Spirit of God knows the mind of God, the Spirit's prayer is always in keeping with the will of the Father.

Additionally, prayer is something believers should do "continually" ([1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)). In [Luke 18:1](#), for example, we are told to pray with persistence and "not give up." Also, when we present our requests to God, we are to pray with faith ([James 1:5](#); [Mark 11:22-24](#)), with thanksgiving ([Philippians 4:6](#)), with a spirit of forgiveness toward others ([Mark 11:25](#)), in Christ's name ([John 14:13-14](#)), and as stated above, with a heart that is right with God ([James 5:16](#)). It's the strength of our faith, not the length of our prayers that pleases Him to whom we pray, so we don't need to impress God with our eloquence or intelligence. After all, God knows what our needs are even before we ask ([Matthew 6:8](#)).

Also, we should make sure we have no unconfessed sin in our hearts when we pray, as this would certainly be an impediment to effective prayer. "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" ([Isaiah 59:2](#); cf. [Psalm 66:18](#)). Fortunately, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" ([1 John 1:9](#)).

Another barrier to effective communication with God is praying with selfish desires and wrong motives. "When you ask you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" ([James 4:3](#)). Rejecting God's call or ignoring His advice ([Proverbs 1:24-28](#)), worshipping idols ([Jeremiah 11:11-14](#)), or turning a deaf ear to the cry of the poor ([Proverbs 21:13](#)) serve as additional obstacles to an effective prayer life.

Effective prayer is a way to strengthen our relationship with our Father in heaven. When we study and obey His Word and seek to please Him, the same God who made the sun stand still upon the prayer of Joshua ([Joshua 10:12-13](#)) invites us to come boldly before the throne of grace and pray with confidence that He will extend His mercy and grace to help us in our time of need ([Hebrews 4:16](#)).

Recommended Resource: [The Prayer That Turns the World Upside Down: The Lord's Prayer as a Manifesto for Revolution by R. Albert Mohler Jr.](#)

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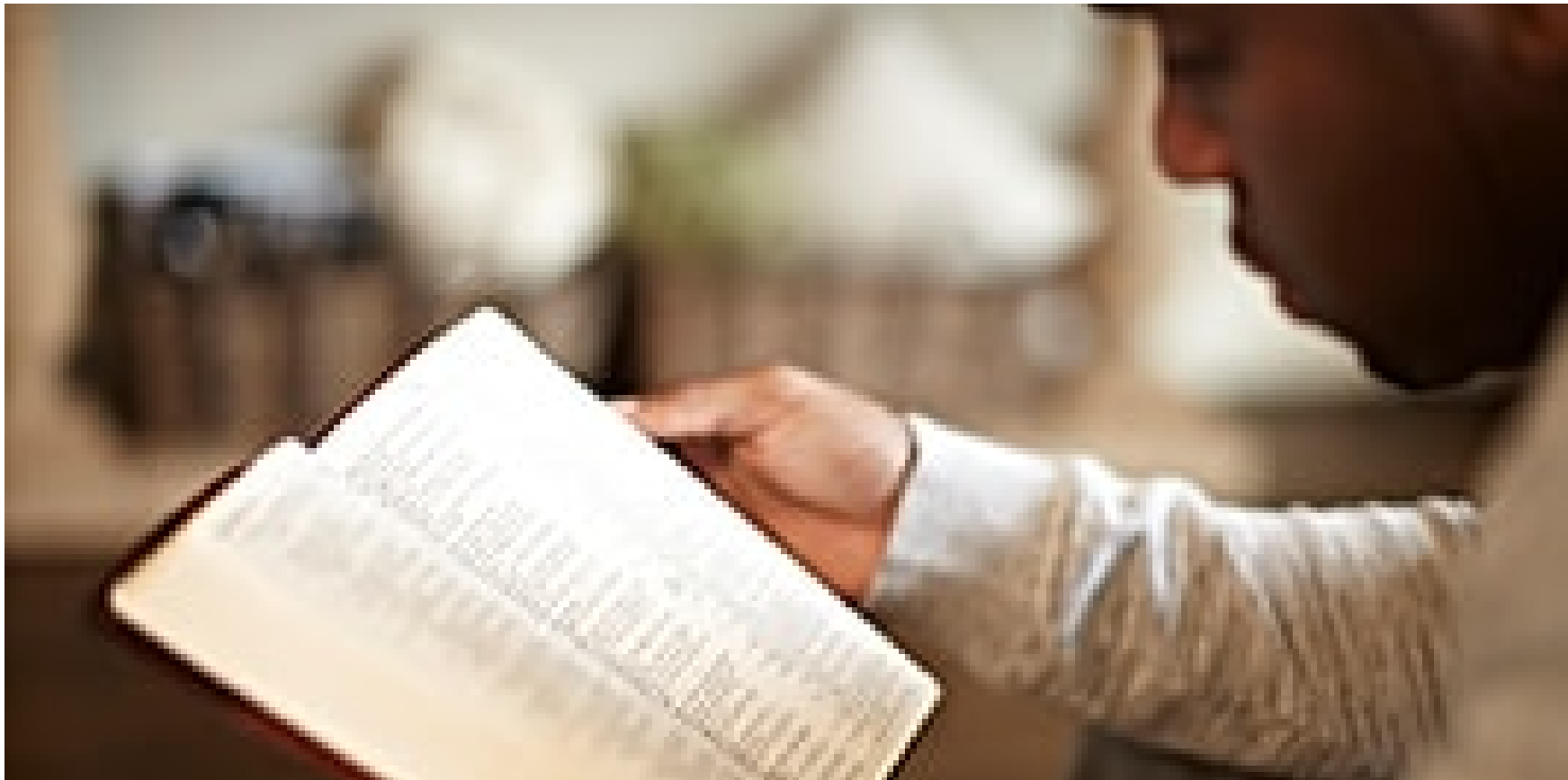
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